

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A contents distribution system comprises a contents provider and a user's portable terminal player. The contents provider, which comprises a contents server and a user information database storing therein user download information and right information, distributes contents over a communication network according to the SDMI check-in/check-out rule. The user's portable terminal player comprises a recording medium playback function that plays back the contents downloaded on a recording medium and a check-in function that returns a playback right to the contents provider. When the contents are distributed to the portable terminal player, the contents provider manages contents distribution according to the check-in/check-out rule in such a way that the contents provider manages the number of check-outs of the contents to the user and, when the user checks in the distributed contents, the portable terminal player erases a contents playback encryption key and a file name and, at the same time, returns the playback right to the user information database.

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